Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

2012   **Barbora Plechatá**

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IS THE POPULARITY OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AFFECTING FORMALITY IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION? A CASE STUDY OF WIDESPREAD USAGE OF SUCH SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN A COMPANY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC.

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Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – ruština

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Plzeň 2012

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2012 ………………………

Table of contents

1 INTRODUCTION

The topic of my thesis is "Is the popularity of social networking sites affecting formality in business communication? A case study of widespread usage of such social networking sites in a company in the Czech Republic". The objective is to present social networking sites in detail and try to define degree of their influence on formality in business communication.

The thesis is divided into four main chapters. These chapters are further divided into sub-chapters. The first chapter provides information about primary objective of the study and outlines the contents of individual chapters.

The second chapter is dedicated to business communication. At first it gives basic information about the origin of the word communication. Then it explains what it is communication and why is it important. The last sub-chapter of this one deals with types of communication - their division into verbal and nonverbal types.

Verbal communication is further divided into oral and written forms of communication. For the purposes of this thesis extra attention is paid to written communication. The reason is that written communication is the most common form of communication being used in business. Formal and informal division of writing is also important to be described as they emphasize the differences. For this reason, three sample letters have been briefly commented upon.

Nonverbal communication provides information about body language, eye contact, facial expression and gestures. Nonverbal communication is also very important part of the business environment. Appropriate use of this communication can lead to success not only in business but also in personal life.

The third and one of the key chapters is dedicated to social networking. At first the meaning of social networking is described together with its historical development. It is also necessary to be mentioned basic information about the expansion of the internet in connection with social networking sites (SNSs), as internet is the most important aspect of their existence. Next is the chronological overview of the main social networking site (SNS). In the last sub-chapter of this part the most popular social networking site (SNS) – Facebook is described from the point of view of specific features, security issues and as a tool for business. The author, being avid user of the site, has included the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking site based on her personal experience.

The fourth chapter deals with a practical survey that should outline the basic aim of the thesis. To get closer to that aim, a questionnaire was drawn up. This chapter describes the results of the questionnaire - a detailed analysis of the most important responses with the help of graphs and comments. The whole questionnaire is available in Appendices.

2   BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

2.1   Origin of the word ´communication´

„´Communication´ is a word with a rich history. From the Latin communicare, which means to share, to impart, or to make common, it entered the English language in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The key root is mun-, related to such words as "munificent," "community," "meaning," and Gemeinschaft. The Latin munus has to do with gifts or duties offered publicly-including gladitorial shows, tributes, and rites to honor the dead. In Latin, communicatio did not signify the general arts of human connection via symbols, nor did it suggest the hope for some kind of mutual recognition. Its sense was not in the least mentalistic: communicatio generally involved tangibles." [1]
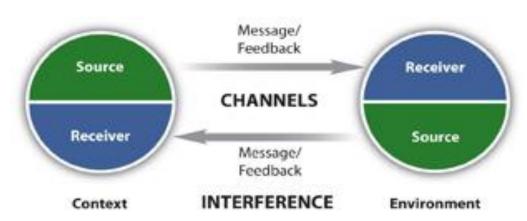
2.2   What is communication?

Communication is an activity, skill, and art that incorporates lessons learned across a wide spectrum of human knowledge. Perhaps the most time-honored form of communication is storytelling. We have told each other stories for ages to help make sense of our world, anticipate the future, and certainly to entertain ourselves. The art of storytelling draws on understanding of ourselves, our message, and how we communicate it to an audience that is simultaneously communicating back to us. Our anticipation, reaction, and adaptation to the process will determine how successfully we are able to communicate. We were not born knowing how to write or even how to talk, but in the process of growing up, we have undoubtedly learned how to tell, and how not tell, a story out loud and in writing. [2]

At the center of communication is the relationship that involves interaction between participants. [3] „In society we share our thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, propositions, facts and figures with individuals as well as groups at all levels, higher, lower or equal.

Communication is, in fact, the most important of all our activities as it has helped us to organize ourselves as a civilized society. In a civilized society there are well-defined roles for all and one and the only way how to play these roles is through communication. All communication is based on, and is guided by role-relationships. Only when we understand and appreciate these role-relationships can we successfully communicate". [4] In other words, communication can be described as the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another through a mutually understood set of symbols. In order to better understand the communication process, it can be explained it in eight essential components below. [5]

1. **Source** – the sender of the message

2. **Message** – the stimulus or meaning produced by the source for the receiver or audience

3. **Channel** - the way in which a message or messages travel between source and receiver

4. **Receiver** - receives the message from the source, analyzing and interpreting the message in ways both intended and unintended by the source

5. **Feedback** - messages that the receiver sends back to the source

6. **Environment** - the atmosphere, physical and psychological, where you send and receive messages

7. **Context** - the setting, scene, and expectations of the individuals involved

8. **Interference/Noise** - anything that blocks or changes the source's intended meaning of the message

Picture 1: Transactional model of communication

2.3 Importance of a communication

The need for communication has been recognized for centuries. In general, communication is a necessary condition of human existence and social organization. If we could not communicate, what would life be about? We were born to communicate. From the simplest to the most complex tasks, the process of communication plays a major role in our life activities. [6] Every person whether a business man or a shop assistant communicates everyday with someone else.

But when it comes to business there is another set of standards that should be taken into consideration in order to achieve the goal of communicating effectively and receiving the response that should be wanted. This is where business communication sets in. [7] „The American Management Association conducted a study of corporate executives to determine what characteristics are needed for moving up the corporate ladder. The executives cited communication, human resource management, and strategic planning as the skills needed for success. Communication is the key concept here, because both the management

of people and the development of strategic plans require good communication skills. Jack N. Behrman and Richard I. Levin make clear the importance of business communication in an article in the Harvard Business Review: „Provision must be made for significantly greater development of written and oral communication skills, including advocacy,elocution, formal report preparation, extemporaneous speaknig, oral response under pressure, and group leading." This statement includes all aspects of communication. [8]

2.4 Types of communication

2.4.1 Verbal communication

„Man is the only species gifted with language". [9] But where does the language come from? There are many theories about the origins of language. One example is described by linguist Geoffrey Finch and his three theories: ´bow-wow´theory, ´the yo-he-ho´theory, and the ´pooh-pooh´theory. „The bow-wow theory sees language as evolving from the noises made by animals as they were being hunted. The hunters imitated these sounds and turned them into human speech. According to the yo-he-ho theory, language evolved from the noises made by humans as they engaged in physical exertion. The final theory suggests that language evolved from the instinctive noises that humans make in the course of everyday life". [10] Because the use of language is primarily in speech, we take up oral communication before its written counterpart. In everyday life, in any organization we communicate more orally than in writing. That applies for both formal and informal communication.

Other key components of verbal communication are sound, words and speaking. Spoken words make up verbal communication. Words alone have no meaning. Only people can put meaning into words. As meaning is assigned to words, language develops, which leads to the

development of speaking. [11] „People are raised in different cultures, with different values, beliefs, customs, and different languages to express those cultural attributes. Even people who speak the same language, like speakers of English in London, New Delhi, or Cleveland, speak and interact using their own words that are community-defined, self-defined, and have room for interpretation. Within the United States, depending on the context and environment, you may hear colorful sayings that are quite regional, and may notice an accent, pace, or tone of communication that is distinct from your own. This variation in our use of language is a creative way to form relationships and communities, but can also lead to miscommunication". [12]

2.4.1.1 Oral communication

Oral or spoken communication is the form of communication that comes most naturally and primarily builds up human relationships and communities. It is the use of the gift of speech, or talking that brings the members of a family, friends and likewise, colleagues in an organization together. [13]

Oral communication has many advantages. One of them is speed. In practice this means that while a letter, dictated and typed, entered in the diary, put in the envelope and carried to the person addressed will take a long time, oral transmission of the message makes the communication immediately effective. That is why many skillful managers save time by calling up their juniors or walking up to their superiors. [14] Another good thing about the spoken word is that it permits an immediate response. When we are talking to someone, we have a two-way flow of ideas. We can exchange information, give and receive feedback, and reach mutual conclusions on the basis of our conversation. This interchange is not possible when you are writing to someone. In writing, the words flow only one way, so the opportunity for questions and replies

is reduced. As a consequence, we can never be absolutely sure that we and the other person fully understand each other. Oral communication also has the advantage of being more personal. It is the most effective tool of persuasion – if we are dealing with bad news/good news, we can do it more effective in person by our voice, facial expression, etc. [15]

With all these advantages are of course connected disadvantages of oral communication. A serious limitation is a human memory. Oral messages cannot be retained for a long time they must be acted upon immediately. If the speaker has not carefully organized his thought, or the listener misses the message then it can leads to misunderstanding. Listening is in this case very important to make oral communication effective. [16]

Listening

Almost half of the working day is spent in listening and we can improve this communication skill through training. A good listener will hear, decode, evaluate, and react to messages in a critical and responsible manner. This type of listening is called active listening. Another type of listening -passive listening- requires little thinking and takes place when we listen almost unintentionally. [17]

Silence

We can also deftly communicate by silence. There is an age old saying –„Silence is half consent". That is true, we keep quiet e.g. in response to a request or a question regarding our opinion about something. But there are many situations in which the silence can send out a negative signal – ignorance, hesitancy, distance, etc. [18]

2.4.1.2 Written communication

„A famous English writer Francis Bacon has said, „Reading maketh a full man, writing an exact man, conference a ready man". In order to make himself ´exact´ i.e. to say effectively what he wants to say, the writer has to make considerable effort. While speech comes to us very naturally and spontaneously, writing comes after serious practice and careful organization of thought". [19]

Written communication involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. The written word allows for a dynamic communication process between source and receiver, but is often asynchronous, which means that it occurs at different times. When we communicate face-to-face, we get immediate feedback, but our written words stand in place of that interpersonal interaction and we lack that immediate response. [20]

The process of composing is an important aspect of written communication and involves planning and expressive language skills. These skills include: the ability to formulate and articulate ideas, the rules of language, narrative skills, vocabulary, knowledge and use of syntax, and the ability to categorize and classify. Pat Charbonet, Associate Director of Press and Public Information for Columbia (CBS) Records in Los Angeles says: „Really good writing skills are essential. The facts have to be right; the grammar, spelling, and punctuation have to be correct". [21]

With all the modern technological advancement, written communication remains the backbone of any organization. „Just as it is impossible to think of social life without oral communication, it is impossible to think of business or an organization without written communication". [22] Almost all formal communication is in writing. When we want a permanent, verifiable record of our ideas, written communication - in the form of letters, e-mails, memos, or reports - is our

best choice. It is also the most effective form to use when we want to deliver the same message to many people in different locations. In addition, written communication is often more convenient than oral communication. [23]

Following part is dedicated to types of written communication based on the style and purpose. Two broad categories are mentioned – formal and informal communication. Both categories are used in both written and oral communication, but the written form is more needed for purposes of this chapter.

Formal communication

Formal communication includes all forms of formal exchanges of information. Business communication and corporate communication are some of the formal communication methods. The basic difference is that all communication under this category is very official and precise. [24]

- Conventional writing:

Letter

„Letters are the most important means of written communication. They were always very important for any organization or individual for the purpose of giving or seeking information". [25]

As a significant form of written communication, a business letter is supposed to have a layout that impresses – must be pleasing to the eyes, clear and attractive. In a business letter format, there are many layouts. The three most popular are the indented/semi-blocked (App. 1, p. 67), blocked (App. 2, p. 68) and full-blocked (App. 3, p. 69). [26] All these types of layouts have typical features of a standard business letter. Differences in layout are not as many as their similarities. Some differences occur due to the typing/printing conventions, indenting, spacing etc. Organizations or writers may choose any of these three letter formats. [27]

Major elements of a business letter [28]:

- Letterhead/sender´s address

- References

- Date

- Inside address

- Attention line

- Salutation

- Subject title

- Body of the letter

- Complimentary close

- Signature

- Enclosures (Encl)

- Postscript (P.S.)

- Carbon Copy Notation (c.c.)

- Reference initials

It is not necessary to go into details of each part of a business letter. For purpose of this thesis is more important to emphasize overall appearance of a business letter and its function in today´s world.

According to major elements mentioned above it is obvious that conventional paper correspondence is very strict, writer must follow the basic structural rules. Each part has its own fixed place. There must be consistency in the style we choose for the letters we write. The three styles should not be mixed. Over the years quite some changes in styles of writing have been introduced by imaginative writers but the basic aims remain the same. „Business writing strives to be crisp and succinct rather than evocative or creative; it stresses specificity and accuracy. This

distinction does not make business writing superior or inferior to other styles. Rather, it reflects the unique purpose and considerations involved when writing in business context". [29]

It may seem that in today´s modern electronic world the traditional form of correspondence gradually disappears and is replaced by electronic correspondence. But in area of business communication it is still the most suitable form. „For example, personal and sensitive correspondence such as messages of congratulation, condolence, or complaint are usually best done by letter. Confirmation of contracts, memos which are confidential and any correspondence which may be needed for legal or insurance purposes should not normally be sent by email". [30]

- Electronic writing

Electronic mail (E-mail)

Electronic mail (see in app. 4, p.70) commonly known as email or e-mail is a means of sending messages between computers. „Modern email cooperates across the Internet or other computer networks. Some early email systems required that the author and the recipient both be online at the same time, in common with instant messaging. Today's email systems are based on a store-and-forward model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need connect only briefly, typically to an email server, for as long as it takes to send or receive messages." [31]

Email has become a popular means of both internal and external communication in business. The main reason is that it is an effective way to communicate quickly and easily with people all over the world. It is especially useful for short messages and for everyday correspondence.

Layout of a typical email message [32]:

- Header information (Email address, Carbon copy (Cc), blind Carbon copy (Bcc), Subject)

- Message text (Salutation, body of an email, closing line)

- Signature block (Senders´ company or private address, phone and fax numbers, email)

Email abbreviations and acronyms:

In order to keep email messages short, people use abbreviations and acronyms for common expressions, just as they do in text messaging. Some of the most commonly used abbreviations and acronyms are given below. [33]

ASAP   as soon as possible

IAE   in any event

FYI   for your information

BTW   by the way

COB   close of business

IOW   in other words

AFAIK   as far as I know

NRN   no reply necessary

OTOH   on the other hand

Emoticons:

An emoticon, also known as smiley, is a pictorial representation of a facial expression using punctuation marks and letters, usually written to express emotions which may not be evident from the words alone, e.g.:

:-)   a smile

:-(a frown

;-)   a wink

These abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons should be used with great care, and only when we have established a friendly, informal relationship with our correspondent. Organizations have, therefore, to take care that business does not suffer just because of the temptation to chat! [34]

According to the main features of electronic mail listed above, we can say that this type of written business communication has mostly the same rules as a business letter and at the same time it is something absolutely unique. In this case it is extremely important to focus on receiver of the email. Many users of email technology pay little attention to basic rules of grammar and format when composing their emails, even in handwritten business correspondence addressed to clients, customers, vendors, business partners, or internal colleagues. This negligent correspondence reflects increasing lack of professionalism. According to Dr. Sana Reynolds, an Associate Professor on the adjunct faculty of Baruch in New York [35]: "We seem to have been seduced by the ease and informality of the medium to produce messages that ignore the rules and conventions usually in place when producing hard copy. We send out messages with grammar, usage or spelling errors…. In the name of speed, we throw caution to the winds and forget sentence patterning, paragraphing, and other conventions that make messages intelligible, creating unattractive and impenetrable data dumps". [36]

Proper spelling and grammar and the ability to frame correspondence in suitably diplomatic language should be hallmarks of electronic mail as well as a regular letter, especially if the communication is directed at a person or persons outside the company.

Informal communication

It is a form of casual conversation or exchange of information. There are no strong rules or guidelines; the only rule is that all the parties should be able to understand each other. This kind of communication does not require a certain topic. It is just normal conversation (oral or written) between known people. [37]

- Conversational writing

This type of communication should happen outside of the business or corporate community. Anyway, these days it is not so surprising, that we can meet with informal emails or letters in some companies. A lot of business emails in English are not only very informal but also very badly written. Sentences are often incomplete and the grammar is incorrect. This makes it very difficult for a non-native speaker. [38]

But it is very important to note that informal correspondence in business communication occurs primarily in the case that between the sender and the receiver is built a friendly relationship.

Some typical features of informal writing [39]:

- May use colloquial words/expressions (guy, kids, awesome, etc.).

- May use contractions (can't, won't, shouldn't, etc.).

- May use first, second, or third person.

- May address readers using second person pronouns (you, your, etc).

- May use abbreviated words (photo, TV, etc).

- May use imperative and active voice.

- May use short and simple sentences.

- Difficulty of subject may be acknowledged and empathy shown to the reader.

To emphasize the differences between formal and informal writing there are mentioned specific examples. [40]

1. Formal writing

<u>Dear Mr. Stephens</u>,

I refer to your email from 25 February and <u>thank you</u> for your enquiry. We <u>would be delighted</u> to provide the services you require for the Book Fair. <u>Please</u> find attached a quotation, which <u>I trust</u> will be acceptable to you.

<u>Should</u> you require any further information, please <u>do not hesitate</u> to contact us. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

<u>Yours sincerely,</u>

Michael Langer

Sales Director

GHW Marketing, s.r.o.

2. Informal writing

<u>Hello Andrew</u>,

Thank you for your email from 25 February <u>enquiring</u> about the Book Fair. We <u>would be pleased</u> to provide the services you require. Our quotation is attached – <u>I hope</u> <u>you</u> will find it acceptable.

<u>If</u> you need any other information, please <u>let us know</u>. I look forward to hearing from you.

<u>Best regards</u>,

Michael Langer

Sales Director

GHW Marketing, s.r.o.

3. Very informal writing

<u>Hi Andy!</u>

<u>Thanks</u> for your email of 25 February. We would be very pleased to provide the services you require for the Book Fair. Please find attached quotation, which I hope <u>you</u> will find <u>OK</u>.

<u>Let me know if you need anything else.</u>
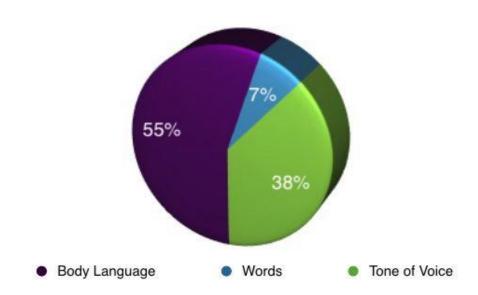<u>Kind regards</u>,

Michael

The main thing to remember is that both formal and informal are correct, it is just a matter of tone and setting. Formal English is used mainly in academic writing and business communication, whereas informal English is casual and is appropriate when communicating with friends and other close ones. When we choose the style of writing we should keep in mind what we are writing and to whom. But whichever style we write in – formal or informal – we must keep it consistent, do not mix the two. [41]

2.4.2 Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is a communication that does not use words. This type of communication takes place all the time. In it we are concerned with such things as body movements, space, time, tone of voice, clothes, posture and gestures and any other kinds of visual and audio signals that may be devised by the communicator. „Since bodily movements, gestures etc. are so important for communication, they are being systematically studied as a subarea of nonverbal communication. It has been termed as ´Kinesics´ that literally means ´body movements´. It stands for the way the body communicates without words, and through various movements of its parts. [42] All the movements, gestures, postures etc. like blinking our eyes, smile or shrugging our shoulders, we use for expression of our thought processes, emotions, etc. We send out signals and messages to other people this way and we expect, they will understand. All these things we do, are a form of communication which is called ´body language´. [43] When we try to tune in to body language, it will help us to understand how other people are reacting to our message. We can say more with a smile or icy stare than we can with words. Simply – „Actions speak louder than words“. [44]

On scientific analysis by Professor Emeritus of Psychology – Albert Mehrabian [45] it has been found that the different aspects of communication account for percentages stated below in picture 2. [46]

Picture 2: Effectiveness of communication

According to this analysis we can say that people pay more attention not to WHAT is said but HOW it is said.

Albert Mehrabian also asserts that we rarely communicate emotional messages through the spoken word. According to Mehrabian, 93 percent of the time we communicate our emotions nonverbally, with at least 55 percent associated with facial gestures. Vocal cues, body position and movement, and normative space between speaker and receiver can also be clues to feelings and attitudes. [47] Like all aspects of communication, body language can be effective and practical, but it also has some limitations. The most important limitation is that people belong to different cultural backgrounds and they send out different body signals. These differences can cause misunderstanding and

misinterpretation. [48] For instance, the OK sign (finger and thumb touching in a circle) used in the United States signifies a zero in France, money in Japan, and a vulgar gesture in South America. [49]

Body language

Body language may express the attitude or state of mind of a person in different situations. For example it may indicate sadness, aggression, anger, enthusiasm, disappointment etc. In every case, it is very practical to understand body language. Educational psychologist Marilyn Maple explains „ When you can consciously ´read´ what others are saying unconsciously, you can deal with issues – at work and at home – before they become problems". [50]

Regarding the importance of body language, management consultant Nancy Austin says „When people don´t know whether to believe what they are hearing or what they are seeing, they go with the body language – it tells the truth. You can play fast and loose with words, but it is much more difficult to do that with gestures". [51]

„Body language works through facial expression, eye contact, gestures, head position, body shape, posture and appearance". [52] All these points work together and help us in decoding the message and what is also important they influence our first impression on a person we met.

Eye contact

Absolutely the most important element in the communication process are the eyes! They are the first of what we pay attention to when looking at another person. We do this automatically - instinctively. [53] The eyes are frequently referred to as the "windows to the soul" since they are capable of revealing a great deal about what a person is feeling or thinking. Some common eye patterns we may note are whether people are making direct eye contact or averting their gaze, how much they are

blinking or if their pupils are dilated. [54] „Looking at somebody for a long time shows the intensity of our interest in him. If the eye contact is brief, or we take our eyes off the person very soon, it indicates nervousness or embarrassment on our part. Of course, eye contact and eye movements convey – their meaning in combination with other facial expressions". [55]

Facial expression

Except the eye contact, facial expression is mentioned. According to The Free Dictionary, facial expression is defined as „a gesture executed with the facial muscles". „A popular saying goes like this: „The face is the index of the heart". Whatever we feel deep within ourselves is at once reflected in the face. It is very important in any face-to-face communication event". While nonverbal communication and behavior can vary dramatically between cultures, the facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger and fear are similar throughout the world. Every given situation depends on how deeply motivated we are and what constructive efforts we make to stay calm and relaxed, and send out positive signals to make the best of the situation. [56]

Hand movements and gestures

Other parts of our body move in a very meaningful manner. Hand movements and gestures inherently accompany the conversation, monologue, discussion and speech. From the broad sweeping gestures to full torpor – it is a wide spectrum of possibilities. Communicative element is not only dimension of gestures but also its dynamic – intensity, acceleration and deceleration, orientation. Nodding the head expresses our nod or disagreement with what the others are saying. [57] „Everybody is aware of the old saying, „Hold your head high". It is a sign of honor and self-respect, confidence, integrity and interest in the person/persons before us". [58]

3   SOCIAL NETWORKING

For better understanding to following part of the thesis it is necessary to explain some key words.

Glossary [59], [60]**:**

Mainframe - a large powerful computer that can work very fast and that a lot of people can use at the same time.

World Wide Web - a system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed via the Internet. Abbreviation: WWW

Web site - a connected group of pages on the World Wide Web regarded as a single entity, usually maintained by one person or organization and devoted to a single topic or several closely related topics.

Social networking - the use of Web sites or other online technologies to communicate with people and share information, resources, etc.

Social network - an online community of people with a common interest who use a Web site or other technologies to communicate with each other and share information, resources, etc.

Social networking site - the phrase used to describe any Web site that enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and form relationships with other users of the same Web site who access their profile.(Facebook,Myspace, etc.) Abbreviation: SNS

Social media - Web sites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts.

Computer-mediated communication - any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers. Abbreviation: CMC

Virtual reality - an environment produced by a computer that looks and seems real to the person experiencing it.

Blog - a web page that is made up of information about a particular subject, in which the newest information is always at the top of the page.

Instant messaging - a type of service available on the Internet that allows you to quickly exchange written messages with people that you know. Abbreviation: IM

Online - connected to other computers through the Internet, or available through the Internet.

Offline - operating independently of, or disconnected from, an associated computer.

Chat room - a place on the Internet where you can write messages to other people and receive messages back from them immediately, so that you can have a conversation while you are online.

Wireless networking - a way of connecting computers or other electronic machines to a network by using radio signals rather than wires. Abbreviation: wi-fi

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) - the activity of buying and selling goods and services and doing other business activities using a computer and the Internet.

Microblogging - the act or practice of posting brief entries on a blog or social-networking Web site.

To hack - a way of using a computer to get into someone else's computer system without their permission.

Hacker - someone who secretly uses or changes the information in other people's computer systems.

Spam - unsolicited messages, especially commercial messages posted on a computer network or sent as e-mail.

3.1 Meaning of Social networking

Approximately once a decade new fundamental technology develops and totally changes the business environment. In any case and regardless of the previous competitive dynamics, companies which understand and properly adopt the technology, become winners, while those that cannot handle it become losers. In the 70s of the 20th century there were mainframes. In the 80s it was a personal computer. In the 90s it was the Internet. Nowadays – cyber social networks. [61]

It seems that nowadays there are social and user-generated sites for just about every activity we can imagine. There are social shopping sites, social financial planning sites, sites for getting book, movie, music, and other reviews. Sites to share our goals, thoughts and meet like-minded people. Sites to help us make decisions on just about anything. Social media has become a huge part of the lives of millions of people worldwide. Whether it's something as simple as looking up reviews of movies from real, live people (instead of professional movie reviewers) or getting advice on major life decisions, there are social sites out there to provide us with the information we seek. Even on general-purpose social networks and social media sites like Twitter or Facebook there are thousands of ways to get input on just about anything. [62]

Online communities reached more prominence in the 1990s as it became apparent that computer-mediated communication had acquired the capacity to enable new forms of community building and participation both in public life and in virtual reality world. In the case of the virtual world, participants sometimes argue that their virtual lives are more interesting and fulfilling than their real lives. While online communities generated new forms of social networking for some—and also raised a range of new issues around the ethics of online communication—by the early 2000s it was apparent that there was a growing bifurcation between these communities and the rest of the Web, where information and

content are abundant but the scope for users to interact with Web sites and one another remains highly limited. [63]

„Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and social contacts by making connections through individuals. While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Internet to promote such connections is only now being fully recognized and exploited, through Web-based groups established for that purpose." [64]

Picture 3: Social networking

Social networking establishes interconnected Internet communities (sometimes known as personal networks) that help people make contacts that would be good for them to know, but that they would be unlikely to have met otherwise. In general, here is how it works:

Users create their own online "profile" with biographical data, pictures and any other information they choose to post. They communicate with each other by making their latest thoughts public in a blog-like format or via e-mail, instant messaging, voice or

videoconferencing to selected members. The service lets members find and invite other members into their personal network (to "friend" them) as well as invite friends of friends. In theory, any individual can make contact through anyone they have a connection to, to any of the people that person has a connection to, and so on. [65]

3.2 Development of social networking

70s – 80s of the 20th century

The potential for computer networking to facilitate newly improved forms of computer-mediated social interaction was suggested in the late 70s. Efforts to support social networks via computer-mediated communication were made in many early online services, including Usenet or bulletin board services (BBS). Usenets let users post articles or posts to newsgroups and BBSs were the first type of sites that allowed users to log on and interact with other, although in a much slower fashion than we currently do. Many prototypical features of social networking sites were also present in online services such as Prodigy, CompuServe, and later GEnie in 1985. CompuServe was the first company to incorporate a chat program into their service. GEnie was a text-based service, and considered the first viable commercial competition to CompuServe. GEnie offered games, shopping, mail, and forums. [66]

90s of the 20th century

Early social networking on the World Wide Web (WWW) began in the form of generalized online communities such as Theglobe.com (1995), Geocities (1994) and Tripod.com (1995). Many of these early communities focused on bringing people together to interact with each other through chat rooms, and encouraged users to share personal information and ideas via personal webpages by providing easy-to-use

publishing tools and free or inexpensive web-space. In the late 1990s, user profiles became a central feature of social networking sites, allowing users to compile lists of "friends" and search for other users with similar interests. Since that time many sites began to develop more advanced features for users to find and manage friends. This newer generation of social networking sites began to flourish with the emergence of SixDegrees in 1997 and LiveJournal in 1999. They were really the predecessors of the live updates we see in social networks currently. [67]

21st century

The early 2000s brought some huge developments in social networking and social media. In 2002 was founded Friendster and it was really the first modern, general social networking site which soon became part of the Internet mainstream. Friendster was followed by Hi5, MySpace and LinkedIn a year later. In 2004 was launched Orkut and Tagged and in 2005 Bebo. Attesting to the rapid increase of social networking sites' popularity, by 2005, it was reported that MySpace was getting more page views than Google. Facebook, launched in 2004, became the largest social networking site in the world in early 2009, and remains largest of all social networks. After the most popular Facebook there were founded some other social networks e.g. Twitter and Badoo in 2006 and Google+ in 2011. [68]

3.3 Internet age

The Internet, sometimes called simply "the Net," is a worldwide system of computer networks - a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. It was conceived by the

Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S. government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPANet. A side benefit of ARPANet's design was that, because messages could be routed or rerouted in more than one direction, the network could continue to function even if parts of it were destroyed in the event of a military attack or natural disaster. During the next two decades, the network that evolved was used primarily by academic institutions, scientists and the government for research and communications. The appeal of the Internet to these bodies was obvious, as it allowed disparate institutions to connect to each other computing systems and databases, as well as share data via E-mail. [69]

„The nature of the Internet changed abruptly in 1992, when the U.S. government began pulling out of network management, and commercial entities offered Internet access to the general public for the first time. This change in focus marked the beginning of the Internet's astonishing expansion". [70]

The global popularization of the Internet was accompanied by a boom in electronic commerce, or e-commerce. British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the World Wide Web (WWW), argued that this focus on commerce was misplaced, as it assumed that Internet users remained primarily consumers of information and content developed by others for online distribution. He argued that the core design principle of the Internet instead lay in the scope that it offered people to interact with one another, including in collaborations in which they became content creators in their own right. [71]

The concept of collaborative participation by the general public in the generation of content, a concept that has come to be called Web 2.0, is centrally important to understanding new media in the 21st century. Web 2.0 applications have features that enable communications in a flat structure—rather than through a centralized hierarchy—which has been shown to facilitate user participation, interactivity, collaborative learning,

and social networking. Web 2.0 applications also generate positive networking effects from harnessing collective intelligence, so that the quality of participation increases as the numbers participating increase, which in turn attracts more users to the Web sites. On the other hand, growth is sometimes accompanied by the arrival of malicious individuals seeking to disrupt or sabotage such social projects. [72]

The Internet is now as much a lived experience as a tool for performing particular tasks, offering the possibility of creating an environment or virtual reality in which individuals might work, socially interact with others, and perhaps even live out their lives.

Everybody who uses the internet on a regular basis has probably encountered such specific abbreviations, acronyms and internet terms which are very typical for this kind of communication. In fact, nowadays this unofficial language is not merely limited to the internet and social networking sites but people use it in communication whether online or offline. From e-mail, Facebook, chat rooms and even through SMS (short message system) the popularity of these shortened acronyms and unique terms has already been manifested. [73]

Some of the most used abbreviations and acronyms are listed: [74]

AFK - Away From Keyboard

BAK - Back at Keyboard

BTW - By the Way

CU – See You

F9 – Fine

FYI - For Your Information

G2G - Got to Go

IDK – I Don´t Know

L8R - Later

LOL – Laughing Out Loud

OIC – Oh, I See

OMG – Oh My God

ROFL - Rolling on the Floor Laughing

SCNR – Sorry, Could Not Resist

TBC - To Be Continued

TY – Thank You

U – You

W8 – Wait

YOYO – You´re on Your Own

3.4 Overview of the main Social networking sites

Below are listed the most famous and widely used social networking sites and their brief description. [74]

These SNSs are briefly described together with their logos which are the copyright of their respective owners.

1) **Friendster** - launched in 2002 as one of the first social networking sites. Now is known as a social gaming site that is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with over 115 million of registered users. The company now operates mainly from three Asian countries - the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. [75]

☺friendster.

2) **Myspace** – popular social networking site for media and entertainment founded in 2003 in the USA with over 125 million active users, specially teenagers, musicians and celebrities. [76]

myspace,

3) **Hi5** – one of the largest social gameing sites in the world founded in 2003 with approximately 50 million monthly unique visitors. In 2011, the social networking site, Tagged, purchased Hi5 for an undisclosed sum. [77]

hi5

4) **LinkedIn** - fast-growing professional networking site that allows members to create business contacts, search for jobs, and find potential clients. It was launched in 2003, reports more than 135 million registred users. [78]

Linked in

5) **Orkut** - social networking site owned and operated by Google Inc., is one of the most visited websites in India and Brazil, founded in 2004. It has over 60 million active users worldwide. [79]

orkut

6) **Facebook** – the world´s largest free social networking site with over 800 million active users launched in 2004 in the USA. [80]

facebook.

7)   **Bebo** – social networking site launched in 2005 in the USA with over 20 million users, very similar to Facebook. The website's name is an acronym for Blog Early, Blog Often. The most widely used social networking site in the United Kingdom. [81]

8)   **Twitter** - an online social networking site and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". It was created in 2006 in the USA, has more than 300 million users worldwide. It has been described as "the SMS of the Internet." [82]

9)   **Badoo** - social discovery site, founded in 2006, is most active in Latin America, Spain, Italy and France, has over 137 million users. [83]

10)   **Google+** - social networking site launched in 2011 by Google Inc. [84] It is working on a similar principle as the Facebook, but communication capabilities are significantly enhances by combining the benefits of Twitter and integrating with other Google services. It is the most important competitor to Facebook with more than 90 million users. [85]

Following part will focused more detailed on Facebook, its brief development, main features, security issues and use for business. The main reason for choosing Facebook is primarily its widespread usage worldwide and specially – it is the most widely used social networking site in the Czech Republic.

3.5 Facebook

The most popular social networking site is available in 65 languages with more than 845 million active users all over the world. [86]

Picture 4: *Like the Internet before it, Facebook has experienced spectacular growth in the seven years since it began.*

This American company based in Palo Alto, California, was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, all of whom were students at Harvard University. Membership was originally limited to Harvard students but gradually expanded to

include all college students, high-school students, and, eventually, since 2006 anyone past age 13.

Access to Facebook is free of charge, and the company earns money from advertisements on the site. New users can create profiles, upload photos, join a preexisting network, and start new networks. [87]

3.5.1 Key features

Profile: Facebook users create a profile page that shows their friends and networks information about them. The choice to include a profile in a network means that everyone within that network can view the profile. The profile typically includes the following: Information, Status, Friends, Photos, Notes, Groups, and The Wall. [88]

The Wall: a space on each user´s profile page where friends can post messages or personal notes and shared them with friends. When sharing an item, users can attach the item to their Wall for all to see, or can tag individual people that they think would be most interested in seeing the item. When a user is tagged, they receive an e-mail notification. [89]

Friends: Users are able to search for friends and acquaintances by e-mail address, school, university, or just by typing in a name or location for search. When people become friends, they are able to see all of others' profiles including contact information. E-mail notifications let users know when new friends have chosen to add them to their list or when someone has sent a message to them within the system. [90]

Chat and Messages: Facebook supports interactive online chat. In the case of online state, user can chat with other online friends, or just send a message to offline friends into their Inbox. [91]

Photos and Albums: A popular feature on Facebook is the ability to share photographs uploaded from a phone, camera, or hard drive. Users have the option to allow only friends to see their pictures or only some of them or anyone. There is an unlimited amount of storage available, which is a major advantage of Facebook's photograph sharing capabilities. [92]

Groups and Fan pages: Facebook supports groups and fan pages, allowing businesses to effectively use Facebook as a vehicle for social media marketing. Users can include into groups anything from grade school connections to hobbies and interests. [93]

Events: Events feature allows friends to organize parties, concerts, and other meetings in the real world. [94]

Applications and Games: There are countless applications available to add to a profile. They range from a list of Top Friends to movie compatibility with others, and maps of where users have traveled. These applications are created by individuals outside of Facebook's employment who are known as Developers. [95]

Facebook is still updating its image and design. The main reason for these updates is to make the conversation between users more lively. The last innovation was in 2011, when the **Video Calling, Timeline**

(gives us an easy way to rediscover the things we shared, and collect our most important moments. It also lets us share new experiences, like the music we listen to or the miles we run), and **Ticker** (displays the updates instantaneously in the right top of the screen) appeared on the users page. [96]

3.5.2 Security issues

With social networking sites people across the world have access to tools and options that were previously non-existent. „However, there are just as many new opportunities to connect as there are to get into potential danger. Social networking has opened up many new doorways for cyber-crime, and with all the people on social networks who are completely new to technology, it is more important than ever to make sure people are aware of the risks." [97]

While any online account is in danger of being hacked, Facebook has unique features that make this danger even more likely. For one thing, it is very common to post personal information which can be used to steal our identity. But the significant danger is because it is so easy to run malicious programs that can hack your account.

Another big problem is: children. Children under the age of 13 should not be using the internet without some form of parental supervision. Facebook has this minimum age limit so that young children cannot make profiles. However, it is easy to fool these systems and just as it is simple for a young child to fake their age online, it is easy for a potential predator to fake a profile claiming to have the same interests as, and be the same age as a child. [98]

The popularity of Facebook has made an easy target for attacks of hackers. Many hackers have gained access to users' accounts to pretend to be them in an attempt to extort money from the users' friends.

Facebook is for many companies a new place to market and branch themselves for free. Through this medium they can connect with customers in a non-formal way, but there is a big danger because it could leave a company vulnerable to hackers.

Many Facebook users are not aware that even at this moment, there is third party access to their profile information. Many users are also not aware that by using applications or taking polls on Facebook, they are granting third party access to their profiles.

Facebook allows each user to set privacy settings, which by default are pretty strict. Facebook creators still try to improve the privacy settings to pretend all the possible risks. There are several options, how to set the privacy. Each user can decide what he will share with other users. For example, if we have not added a certain person as a friend, that person will not be able to view our profile (timeline). However, we can adjust the privacy settings to allow users within our network to view part or all of our profile (timeline). We can also create a "limited profile," which allows us to hide certain parts of our profile (timeline) from a list of users that we select. If we do not want certain friends to be able to view our full profile (timeline), we can add them to our "limited profile" list. [99]

Many critics say that users should not be putting information on the Internet-especially Facebook--that they would not want others to know. Some even go as far as to say that privacy on the web is a foolish notion. The easiest way to keep ourselves safe is to stay informed. Keep up to date on Facebook changes and privacy settings. Do not put information in our profile that can give anyone access to other portions of our life. If we have something we would like to share with a friend, we should remember that in person is often a much safer route than on a public Internet site. [100]

3.5.3 Facebook for business

Facebook has a unique possibility for businesses to create their own account on Facebook. This service is very extensively used these days all over the world. In Appendix 5 (see app.5, p. 71) is illustrated how the official website looks like.
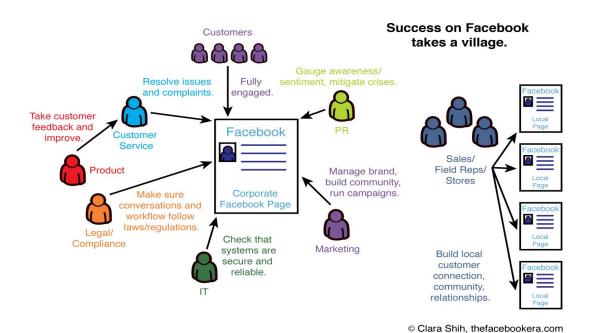
On the official Facebook website are given differences between a business account and personal account as follows: „Business accounts are designed for individuals who only want to use the site to administer Pages and their ad campaigns. For this reason, business accounts do not have the same functionality as personal accounts. Business accounts have limited access to information on the site. An individual with a business account can view all the Pages (see app. 6, p. 72) and Social Ads (see app. 7, p. 74) that they have created, however they will not be able to view the profiles (timelines) of users on the site or other content on the site that does not live on the Pages they administer. In addition, business accounts cannot be found in search, send or receive friend requests, or create/develop apps". [101] In appendices 5, 6 and 7 we can see the real look of the websites, the main steps how to create the business account and advices how to use it effectively.

Following part is dedicated to main advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook for business.

Advantages:

- Free registration and using

- Possibility of editing and adding information as needed

(Current special offer, new products, events, contests, links, photos)

- Constant promotion and advertising

- Good way to check credibility (privacy) of customer or business partner

- New customer acquisition

- Quick communication with customers

- Costumer engagement

- Possibility of making contact with any of the registered users

- Possibility of recommendation from existing customers or fans to their friends

- Customer feedback available directly on the wall for all visitors of the page

- Possible connections with experts and professionals and exchange of valuable information from specific field

Picture 5: *„Facebook is the ultimate test of an organization's ability to collaborate, communicate, and coordinate internally and externally*

across multiple different groups, each of which plays an important role in providing an exceptional customer experience." [102]

Disadvantages:

- Negative comments and spams from customers or any SNS users

- High competition

- Hacking into the system and stealing data

- Limited target group (most users are young)

- Loss of formal and personal communication with potential customers

- Constant monitoring of the page and capability of rapid response to all comments and questions of customers (visitors of the page)

- Allowed access to employees may reduce their productivity at work

- Inappropriate employee activity on Facebook may threaten the reputation of a company

- General distrust of people to social networking sites

According to the above listed pros and cons, we can say that using of Facebook as a marketing tool can be very beneficial and innovative to many companies, but it is also necessary to consider possible risks that this kind of business brings.

4 PRACTICAL PART

The second main part of the thesis is a practical part – a case study of widespread usage of social networking sites in a company in the Czech Republic.

In general, the main point of research is to find the answers to theoretical questions and verify statements in use. The concrete target of this research is firstly to verify if Czech companies use some social networking site, if so then for what purpose and eventually, how using of such social networking site may affect the formality in business communication in these companies.

To obtain credible results, it was necessary to choose and address specific group of people. In this case, among the potential respondents should be employees from Czech companies, where was expected using of formal written and electronic communication, and using of social networking sites inside the company.

It was necessary to consider which companies, based in the Czech Republic could meet these conditions. First came into consideration large companies such as ŠKODA AUTO a.s., Pilsner Urquell, Telefónica O2 a.s., ČEZ a.s., Vodafone Czech Republic a.s., GE Money Bank a.s., and some others. These nationally and internationally known companies were likely to meet all required conditions. Made contact with these companies was relatively simple because all of them have its own website on the internet or on Facebook where contacts are stated. Unfortunately, most of these companies declined to cooperate (some did not answer) with the reasons that such sensitive data cannot be given or that their company do not meet the conditions required to complete the questionnaire (not use social networking sites internally but only for communication with customers) or that social networking is strictly forbidden to all employees during working hours.

Based on these findings, it was necessary to amend the original intent of research focused on one particular company and try to contact as many companies as possible. It means that the surveyed companies will not be mentioned.

4.1 Questionnaire

To get answers to all questions listed above, electronic questionnaire has been prepared. (See app. 8, p.75) Respondents were employees from several companies. The questionnaire was anonymous, drawn up in Czech, sent as a link via email. Thirty four respondents in total filled in questionnaires from 6th April to 20th April 2012. Five questionnaires had to be eliminated for incompleteness. There might be differences in answers with respect to the age or gender.

The questionnaire consists of sixteen structured questions and one non structured question. Respondents were supposed to choose one alternative in questions 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13 and 16; more alternatives in questions 2, 11, 14 and 15; yes or no alternative in questions 1, 5, 7, 10 and 12 and the last question 17 is non-structured – open – gives to respondents an opportunity to express their opinion.

Questionnaire was sent to twenty companies based in the Czech Republic, respondents are thirty four in total. Companies were chosen with respect to their focus – mostly business, information technology, etc.

4.1.1 Results of the questionnaire

Results of the questionnaire analyze the most important questions and finally comment after all questions. In following paragraphs some important questions are illustrated by graphs. All results are described with help of graphs because these illustrations are very legible and clear

and it shows the real situation unambiguously. Data of the research are described as numbers and percentage; it shows the real relationship of one value with other values. These data are followed by commentary.

1) **General questions about using of SNS in employees´ personal life.**

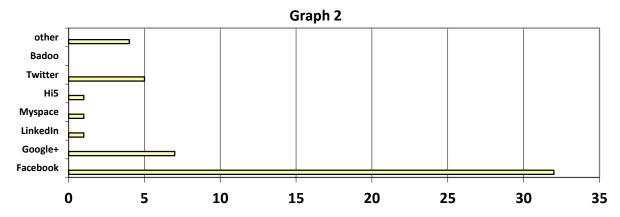**Do you have your own profile on some social networking site (SNS)?**

To this question absolute majority of respondents (94%) answered „Yes". This question was important to be asked mainly to find out, if the employees know social networking sites and if they use them personally.

Graph 1

Which SNS do you use?

Respondents could choose more alternatives – Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Myspace, Hi5, Twitter, Badoo, or other. This question was asked only if the answer in question 1 was „Yes". It means that to this question there were thirty two possible respondents. All of them marked Facebook (100%), seven of them marked Google+ (22%), five of them marked Twitter (16%), four of them marked other (13%), more we can see in Graph 2.

Graph 2

For a complete picture, respondents also answered the following questions: **How long do you use SNS?** and **In what language do you use your profile on SNS?** 74% of respondents use SNS (Facebook) for more than two years and 68% use their profile in Czech language.
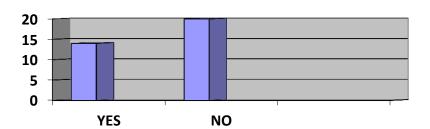
2) Questions regarding the use of SNS at the workplace?

Do you use SNS for communication at the workplace?

For purposes of the research, that is one of the key questions. Of all thirty four respondents, 41% answered that they use SNS for communication at the workplace and 59% answered that they not. (See in Graph 3) The result is not so unambiguous, however the answer "No" predominates.

With this result, we can also answer the following question: **Which profile do you use to communicate with your colleagues or customers?** Fourteen (41%) possible respondents could choose personal profile or working profile. It was founded out that nine of them uses personal profile, five of them has working profile which is used only for working purposes – communication with customers or colleagues. According to these findings, most of the respondents log on their personal profile during working hours.
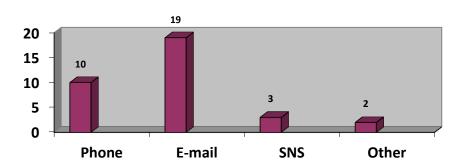
Graph 3

To find out more deeply about communication through SNS between employees and their bosses twenty employees responded to the question: **Do you communicate with your boss/superior through SNS?** Eleven employees answered "No", nine of them answered "Yes". Below (Graph 4) we can see the most often form of communication between employees and bosses.

Which form of communication do you use with your boss/superior most often? (Except face-to-face communication) – Phone, e-mail, SNS or others. Respondents could choose only one alternative. More than a half (56%) use e-mail, 29% use phone and only 9% of them use social networking sites for communication with boss. Complete picture we can see in Graph 4 below.
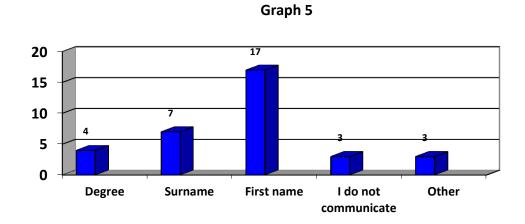
Graph 4

How do you call your boss/superior in written communication?

- Degree (Master, Professor, etc.), Surname, First name, I do not communicate with him in writing or other.
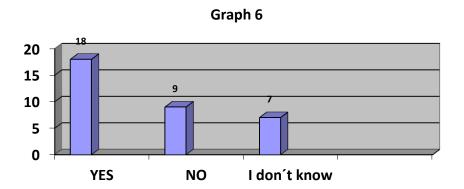
The reason for incorporation of this question in the questionnaire was to try to define the relationship between employees and their superiors. Despite being limited to the issue of written communication, we can say that as they call a superior in written communication, so they probably also call him in personal communication. According to results, half of employees call boss by his first name. Surname use 21%, degree 12% (more in Graph 5).

Graph 5

3) Questions about using SNS in companies for business

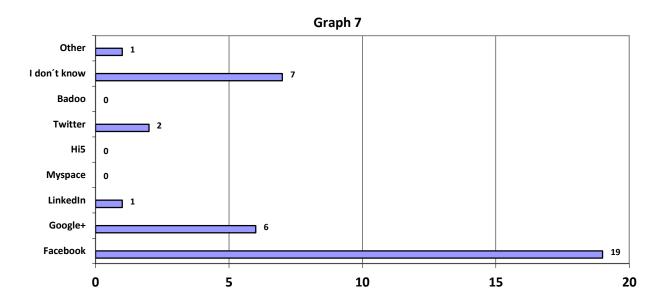**Is your company registered on some SNS?**

Graph 6 shows, that from thirty four respondents, 53% answered "Yes", 26% answered "No" and quite a large number of employees do not even know if their company is registered on some social networking site.

Graph 6

In Graph 7 we can see a little closer which SNS are used in these companies.
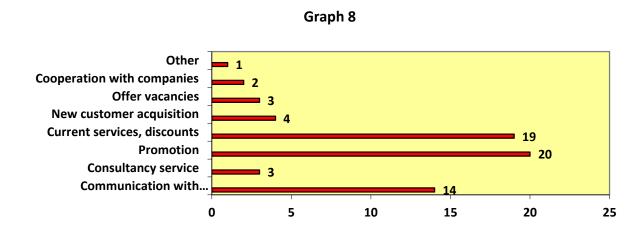
Which SNS does your company use?

Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Myspace, Hi5, Twitter, Badoo, I do not know or other. Again more alternatives were possible to choose. Facebook again prevails (73%) over all other SNS, the second - far from Facebook - is Google+ (12%), third is Twitter (8%) and then LinkedIn (2%). Significant number (27%) answered „I do not know".

Graph 7
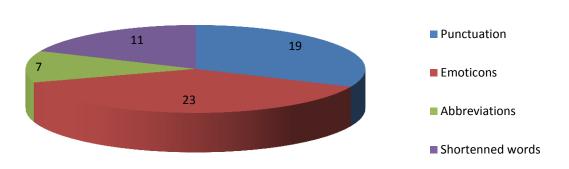
For what purposes does your company use SNS?

More alternatives could be chosen - Communication with customers, Consultancy service, Promotion of the company, Current range of services, promotional discounts, news, New customer acquisition, Offer vacancies, Cooperation with other companies or other. Graph 8 shows that the main purpose why these companies use SNS is to promote the company (83%), to offer their current services and discounts (79%) and to communicate with customers (58%).

Graph 8

Category	Value
Other	1
Cooperation with companies	2
Offer vacancies	3
New customer acquisition	4
Current services, discounts	19
Promotion	20
Consultancy service	3
Communication with…	14

Mark if you use in SNS communication:

In this question more alternatives could be marked - Punctuation and punctuation marks, Emoticons (smileys), Abbreviations and acronyms (LOL, ASAP, FYI, etc.), Shortened words (W8, dept., let´s, etc.). This question was asked only to respondents, who use SNS in real life (including work as well). Emoticons are widely used by 96%, 79% use punctuation and punctuation marks, 46% use shortened words and 29% use abbreviations.

Graph 9

The last structured question was supposed to find out more about the most often used communication between companies and their customers. 17 respondents use e-mail most often for it, 15 of them are in contact with customers most often by phone and only 2 of them use social networking sites as a communication channel with customers.

Following part is dedicated to non-structured question where respondents were allowed to write down their own opinion about using of SNS at the workplace. All responses were carefully read and then summarized as follows:
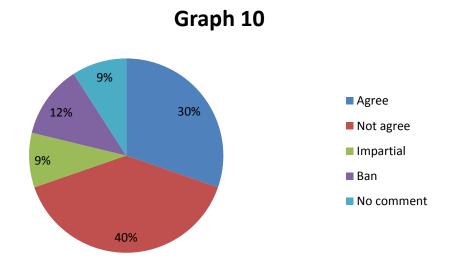
In general, what do you think about using of SNS at the workplace?

The most frequent response to this question was that communication through SNS is a quick exchange of information but at the workplace should be used very carefully. Respondents agreed to use SNS in case to promote a company and improve its reputation – it is a good marketing tool. According to a few of them, SNS at the workplace can be a perfect way how to strengthen colleagues´ relationships in more informal and relaxed way. Several respondents also acknowledged the fact that they use social networking sites despite the boss´s ban. Their

argument to this statement is that they need occasional distraction and break time during working hours, and for this purpose logging on Facebook is the best way for them. One respondent thinks that Facebook can be a good opportunity for bosses to easily see general view of employees (e.g. satisfaction survey, evaluation of management, comments, etc.).

There were of course opposite responses as well. According to more than half respondents the most significant negative aspect of using SNS at the workplace is a possibility of distraction for most of the employees' working hours, reduced productivity and concentration and also all the risks connected with security issues.

For easier comparison of responses approximate summary is given in Graph 10. Question could be: Do you agree with using of SNS at the workplace?

Graph 10

Agree — 30%
Not agree — 40%
Impartial — 9%
Ban — 12%
No comment — 9%

5 CONCLUSION

Social networking is a phenomenon of this era. Just as any phenomenon, social networking sites (SNS) touched upon a need within society and provided an innovative way to satisfy that desire. It allows people to communicate in an easy and efficient environment and, with the resources at its disposal, has the potential to become integrated even further into the framework of our lives.

The objective of this thesis was to find out whether the popularity of social networking sites is affecting formality in business communication. From the theoretical point of view is obvious that social networking is nowadays one of the most widely used means of communication worldwide. In recent years their use has expanded many times and the growth of new registered users still continues.

From the technical interpretation of business communication in the first part of the thesis can be summarized that this type of communication strictly observes "anchored" rules. The letters and emails are still an essential part of business communication. Letters have got the rules that did not fundamentally change for many years e-mail is a little less strict about the structure and with it sometimes appear informal expressions. But as a whole, business letters and emails are taken as a formal means of written business communication.

The next main part of the thesis provides information about social networking. For this part it was necessary to explain key words at first. Without explanation of some technical terms, connected with electronic connectivity, that appears in the text the reader may be confused and would obtain an incomplete view of this topic. After the glossary, is provided meaning and characterization of social networking and chronological development of social networking sites. Since the social networking could not exist without the internet, another part is devoted to this huge phenomenon, its origins, gradual development and subsequent

global expansion. Internet´s indispensability and globalized connection, it is no surprise, have helped create countless new vocabulary. Communication on social networking sites is a good proof. On these SNSs mainly informal abbreviations, acronyms and shortened words phrase word occur. Several examples are given in the thesis to make a better understanding.

Today, the main representative of the social networking sites is Facebook and it is the reason why it has been paid such a great attention at the end of the third chapter. There are detailed descriptions of key features of Facebook that make it a unique social networking site (SNS). Is networking on a virtual way (Facebook) risk free? The answer is NO! As demonstrated in chapter 3 of the thesis, users are exposed to many risks every time they log on to their profiles. This fact is addressed by SNSs including Facebook which has devoted a separate section to inform users about the security issues and to fully familiarize readers with this negative fact. One of the Facebook services calls Facebook for business, where companies or individuals can create the business account and use it for their business purposes. Many companies in the Czech Republic use this service for promoting the company and offering their products or services to customers.

The last chapter contains practical requirements that are defined in the thesis: "A case study of widespread usage of such social networking sites in a company in the Czech Republic". As a method to achieve this goal, a questionnaire was chosen. In the very beginning of the research it was with great regret found out that none of the addressed companies were willing to fill out a questionnaire especially regarding the use of social networking sites at the workplace. After these refusals it was agreed to have more respondents from different Czech companies, especially people willing to cooperate and fill in the questionnaire. The target group for this questionnaire was employees of various companies

from the Czech Republic, where it was expected that it would be convenient for the respondents to give objective opinion.

In surveyed companies was found out that most of employees personally use Facebook but their approach to officially use Facebook or some other social networking site at the workplace was mostly negative. For the purpose of communication between employees and supervisors and between employees and customers in addition to personal communication is in these companies mostly email and phone is used. Social networking sites (SNS) in these cases are used primarily for promotion of a company.

On the basis of all results collected from this research can be summarized that despite the global spread and popularity of social networking sites, in many companies in the Czech Republic they are considered taboo. Social networking sites (SNS) are within the business sphere used primarily as a marketing tool that has the desire to get as much as possible to the attention of potential customers. As a means of communication among the employees SNSs are not too much acceptable rather, they are considered to be a disturbing element which reduces their work concentration.

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Picture 5

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8 ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis was to determine whether the popularity of social networking can affect the formality of business communication. To achieve this it was necessary first to clarify the theoretical background, the basic information about what is communication, its forms and how it manifests itself in business, and also to define social networking sites, their meaning, historical development and specific features. In addition to a chronological overview of the most used social networking sites have been described in detail the most common one - Facebook. Another key point to prove the goal was composing and subsequent elaborating of the questionnaires. The target group for this questionnaire was employees of various companies from the Czech Republic, who were expected to have the conveniences necessary to obtain an objective result. Based on these theoretical and practical bases it was found that the most of employee uses social networking sites, but certainly not as the main communication tool at the workplace. It follows that it does not fundamentally affect the formality of business communication.

9 RESUMÉ

Hlavním cílem bakalářské práce bylo zjistit, zda popularita používání sociálních sítí může ovlivňovat formálnost obchodní komunikace. K dosažení tohoto cíle bylo nutné nejdříve objasnit teoretické pozadí, tedy základní informace o tom, co je to komunikace, její formy a jak se projevuje v obchodní sféře, a dále také definovat sociální sítě, jejich význam, historický vývoj a specifické znaky. Kromě chronologického přehledu nejpoužívanějších sociálních sítí byla detailněji popsána nejrozšířenější sociální síť - Facebook. Dalším stěžejním bodem pro tyto účely bylo vypracování a následné zpracování dotazníku. Cílovou skupinou pro tento dotazník byli zaměstnanci různých firem v České Republice, u kterých se předpokládalo potřebné zázemí k získání objektivního výsledku. Na základě těchto teoretických a praktických podkladů bylo zjištěno, že sociální sítě většina zaměstnanců využívá, ale rozhodně nejsou hlavním komunikačním nástrojem na pracovišti. Z toho vyplývá, že nijak zásadně neovlivňují formálnost obchodní komunikace.

10 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Indented/Semi-blocked style in a business letter
http://www.savvy-business-correspondence.com/IndentedBizLetter.html
[Retrieved 4 April 2012]

Imperial Stationery Ltd
258 North Hampton Road   Manhasset, NY 10847   (914) 375-2788

January 4, 2007

Ms. Ashley Nickols
Savbizcor Ltd
28 Green St., Suite 11
Upstate, NY 10947

Dear Ms. Nickols:

Thank you for ordering 15 cases of premium paper from Imperial Stationery Ltd. Your order has been shipped and should reach you within the next five business days.

Find enclosed your total bill for the above order amounting to $794.85, and the check for $23.85 is your refund. Because you paid in advance, we are giving you 3 percent cash discount and we also are paying for shipping and handling.

Imperial Stationery is pleased to add you to its list of customers. We look forward to your next order.

Sincerely,

J. O'Conelly

Jennifer O'Conelly
Customer Service

2 Enclosures

Appendix 2: Blocked style in a business letter

<http://www.savvy-business-correspondence.com/ModifiedBlockBizLetter.html> [Retrieved 4 April 2012]

Gregory Donaldson
Minoan Inc
247 Madison Ave.,Suite 2103
New York, NY 10015

December 3, 2006

Dixie Cleverelle
Savbizcor Ltd
28 Green St., Suite 14
Upstate, NY 10947

Dear Ms. Cleverelle:

The first shipment of equipment from Savbizcor Ltd has arrived. We are delighted with every piece. Therefore, we decided to make our initial purchase larger than anticipated. I am attaching our purchase order No. 8930 for additional goods totaling list price $700,000.

Since you already have a copy of our Procurement Guidelines, I shall not attach them to this order. As before, we will establish a letter of credit. Please inform me of shipping dates.

Sincerely,

G. Donaldson

Gregory Donaldson,
Chief Procurement Officer

Enclosure: Purchase Order No. 8930

Appendix 3: Full-blocked style in a business letter <http://www.savvy-business-correspondence.com/BlockBizLetter.html> [Retrieved 14 April 2012]

Dixie Cleverelle
SavbizCor Ltd
28 Green St., Suite 14
Upstate, NY 10947

October 27, 2006

Ms. Margaret Edwards
Barnelli Ltd
48 Stanstead Road
London SE27 1HF

For the Attention of Financial Manager

Dear Ms. Edwards:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the excellent job you did in arranging financing for our project. We appreciate the fact that you made yourself available for discussion seven days a week. We were impressed by your thourough knowledge of financing and investment banking.

We have been dealing with our new financial institution for about a week now. The advantages of association with this institution are already apparent. I feel as though we have taken a quantum leap forward in progress.

I would not hesitate to retain your services again and to recommend your firm to any company seeking the best representation.

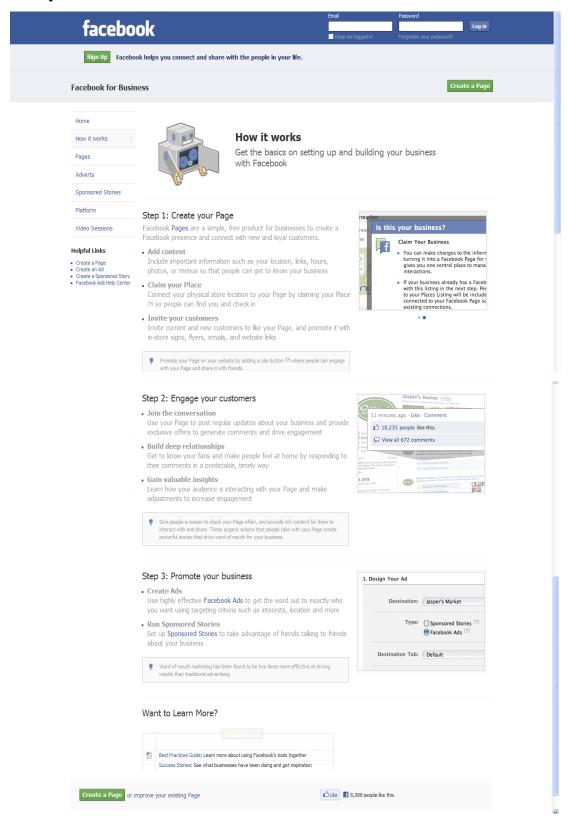Sincerely yours,

D. Cleverelle

Dixie Cleverelle,
President

Appendix 4: Email

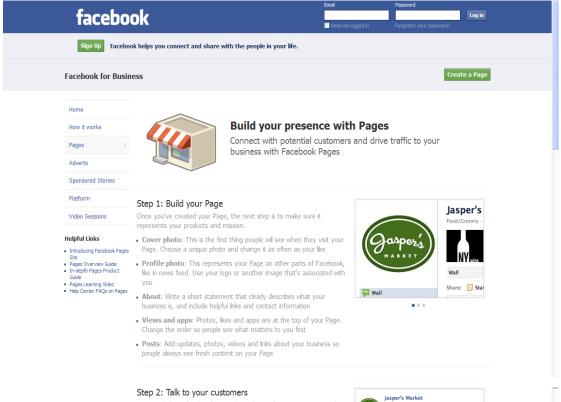<http://www.savvy-business-
correspondence.com/EmailBasics.html> [Retrieved 2 April 2012]

Appendix 5: Official website – Facebook for business – How it works

<http://www.facebook.com/business/howitworks/> > [Retrieved 2 April 2012]

Appendix 6: Official website – Facebook for business - Pages

<http://www.facebook.com/business/pages/> [Retrieved 2 April 2012]

Step 4: Learn and Grow

Set some goals to shape your Page posts and ensure they are useful and relevant. Then check the metrics on your Page Insights Dashboard [?] regularly to learn:

- Who your customers are
- What day of the week most people visit
- How often people comment
- Which posts are most engaging

> 💡 Update your Page at times when fans are most engaged, and encourage participation with weekly pinned posts.

New Likes? **73,782** ↑107%   Lifetime Likes? **355,152**

Active Users?
☑ Daily Active Users   ☑ Weekly Active Users

200,000

100,000

Expert Tip: Why Create a Conversation Calendar?

Think of your Page like a well-planned magazine with consistent, targeted content:

- Post updates when people are most engaged (this data can be found in Page Insights).
- Pin a different post to the top of your Page every week so people always see your most important content first

> 💡 Learn how to make a simple Conversation Calendar

Want to improve your Pages?

📄 Pages Optimization Guide: Create an engaging Page strategy
📄 Facebook Insights Guide: Use Page metrics to increase performance

Create a Page or improve your existing Page
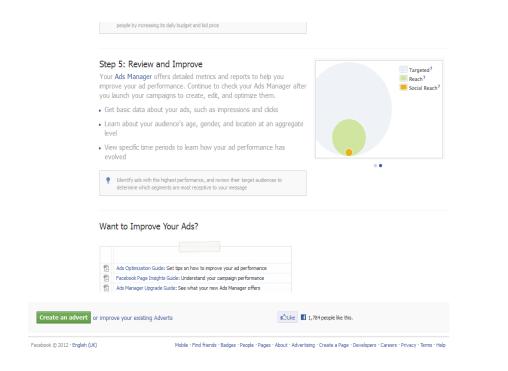
👍 Like   f 2,137 people like this.

Appendix 7: Official website – Facebook for business – Social Adverts

http://www.facebook.com/business/ads/ [Retrieved 2 April 2012]

Appendix 8: Questionnaire

Source: own processing by Barbora Plechatá [Retrieved 26 April 2012]

1) **Do you have your own profile on some social networking site (SNS)?**

- Yes

- No

2) **Which SNS do you use?**

- Facebook

- Google+

- LinkedIn

- Myspace

- Hi5

- Twitter

- Badoo

- Other:

3) **How long do you use SNS?**

- more than 2 years

- 1-2 years

- about 1 year

- less than half a year

4) **In what language do you use your profile on SNS?**

- Czech

- English

- Other:

5) **Do you use SNS for communication at the workplace?**

- Yes

- No

6) **Which profile do you use to communicate with your colleagues or customers?**

- Personal profile

- Working profile (used only for work purposes)

7) **Do you communicate with your boss through SNS?**

- Yes

- No

8) **Which form of communication do you use with your boss most often? (except face-to-face communication)**

- Phone

- E-mail

- Social networking sites

- Other:

9) **How do you call your boss in written communication?**

- Degree (Master, Professor, etc.)

- Surname

- First name

- I do not communicate with him in writing

- Other:

10) **Is your company registered on some SNS?**

- Yes

- No

- I do not know

11) **Which SNS does your company use?**

- Facebook

- Google+

- LinkedIn

- Myspace

- Hi5

- Twitter

- Badoo

- I do not know

- Other:

12) **Is the profile of your company on SNS accessible for editing to you?**

- Yes

-No

13) **Who is allowed to edit the profile of your company on SNS?**

- All employees

- Special department dealing with communication with customers

- Only boss

- A responsible person

- Other:

14) **For what purposes does your company use SNS?**

- Communication with customers

- Consultancy service

- Promotion of the company

- Current range of services, promotional discounts, news

- New customer acquisition

- Offer vacancies

- Cooperation with other companies

- Other:

15) **Mark if you use in SNS commmunication:**

- Punctuation and punctuation marks

- Emoticons (smileys)

- Abbreviations and acronyms (lol, ASAP, FYI, etc.)

- Shortened words (W8, dept, let´s, etc.)

16) **Which form of communication do you use with your customers most often? (except face-to-face communication)**

- Phone

- E-mail

- Social networking sites

- Other:

17) **In general, what do you think about using of SNS at the workplace?**